

# Inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities



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Living in Pakistan's mountain area is extremely challenging for people with disabilities. The arduous terrain makes it difficult to access health services, and limits opportunities to participate in capacity building or economic and social activities. Grants from governmental and non-governmental organizations are facilitating community-based inclusive development, as well as the rehabilitation and empowerment of people with disabilities.

Women with different disabilities are taught local wool-spinning techniques in the northern provinces of Pakistan (CHIP)

There are many isolated pockets of habitation in the northern provinces of Pakistan, due to its mountainous topography. Conditions are especially tough in Gilgit Baltistan province, home to five of the world's 14 eight-thousand-metre peaks. Basic goods are not available on a regular basis, and sometimes transportation is impossible.

Persons with disabilities (PwDs) are among the most deprived segments of society in Gilgit Baltistan, lacking access to health and educational facilities, vocational skills, income-earning opportunities and social activities. Before 2012, only 2 percent of children with disabilities attended school, and less than 15 percent of adults with varying levels of disability were engaged in economic activities. In short, they were heavily dependent, and largely excluded from economic and social life.

Promoting inclusive development is the overall goal of the Civil Society Human and Institutional Development Programme (CHIP). Originally initiated by Swiss development organizations, CHIP became an independent NGO in 2005, based in Pakistan. CHIP began its work for persons with disabilities in some districts of Pakistan. Given the high need – the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 15 percent of the world's population lives with a disability [1] – the organization is present in all provinces today, and receives funds from the Government of Pakistan and international NGOs.

In 2006, CHIP started the inclusive development programme in the Skardu and Ghanche districts in Gilgit Baltistan. The current project "Rehabilitation and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Skardu and Ghanche, 2012–2015" is supported by LIGHT FOR THE WORLD with a grant of € 322 300. The current project aims to include people with disabilities in all aspects of life.



*"CHIP's assistance has allowed me to use my skill set and earn a respectable living for myself."*

Iqbal, 23, hearing- and speech-impaired carpenter

*"Thanks to CHIP, one day I will be able to fulfil my dream of becoming a teacher!"*

Ali Shah, 12, joined conducted sensitization sessions

## Lessons learned



Despite his physical disability, Abdur Rahman maintains a wool- and carpet-weaving microbusiness (CHIP)

At first, CHIP supported blind people, later extending its outreach to people with physical, hearing and speech impairments. The nature of the intervention also became more comprehensive, growing from physical rehabilitation to educational, economic and social inclusion according to the age, gender and medical condition of those concerned.

The methodology aims at strengthening local community-based organizations (CBOs) to become effective and inclusive development actors. This is done through a twofold approach: 1) supporting organizational development as a whole, by providing training, mentoring and coaching; and 2) sensitizing and capacitating the organization to identify persons with disabilities, refer them to relevant rehabilitation services and effectively include them in their own structures and programmes.

Struggling through the mountainous landscape, hostile weather and landslides with minimal facilities at their disposal, CHIP and its partners have played a life-changing role for the beneficiaries, who, since 2006, have totalled 800 people with disabilities in 50 villages of Skardu and Ghanche. In 2014, CHIP was awarded the title "Best NGO in Baltistan".

- Disability is usually left to the public and non-profit, mainly charity, sectors, and rarely attracts private investments.
- The inclusion of PwDs into social and economic activities improves their quality of life, but also reduces the burden on their family members and caretakers.
- The systematic selection of community-based organizations for partnership is crucial for the sustainability of the project, as disability can only be successfully mainstreamed by organizations that are really committed to inclusion.



Yousuf Shan had polio at the age of five; he now attends school in Skardu (LIGHT FOR THE WORLD)

Main achievements and activities of the project to empower persons with disabilities (PwDs) (2012–2015)		
Areas of intervention	Project achievements	Activities promoted in the project period (covering 18 old and 32 new villages)
<b>Health</b>	704 PwDs (= 166% of project target) received medical diagnosis while 423 (105% of target) received medical rehabilitation. (Baseline: 0%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of PwDs through specifically trained community mobilizers (who are mentored by disability experts).</li> <li>• Facilitation of medical assessment and access to rehabilitation services and assistive devices.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	148 out of 175 children with disabilities (= 85%) are enrolled in mainstream schools. 27 children suffering from severe disability are included in special schools. (Baseline: 2%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection and accessibility audit of mainstream and special schools where children with disabilities can be admitted.</li> <li>• Provision of education material.</li> <li>• Training of teachers on teaching children with disabilities and on disability equality.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	313 PwDs (= 139% of project target) are engaged in economic activities. (Baseline: 13%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Career counselling" of PwDs.</li> <li>• Facilitate training of PwDs on business management and in setting up enterprises.</li> <li>• Promote training through apprenticeship with local businesses and in existing technical training institutes run by CBOs.</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	77% (target: ≥ 80%) of PwDs are included in social and recreational activities. (Baseline: 21%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness-raising at communal level regarding causes of disability and importance of rehabilitation and inclusion (theatre performances, wall-chalking and media campaign).</li> <li>• Talent shows of PwDs as part of their confidence building and linkages with disabled people's organizations (DPOs).</li> </ul>
<b>Empowerment</b>	65% (target: ≥ 80%) of adult PwDs are included in CBOs and self-help groups. (Baseline: 4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of 12 CBOs and 1 DPO on community mobilization, disability equality, organizational and financial management, resource mobilization, with regular monitoring and mentoring.</li> <li>• Facilitate inclusive strategic planning of CBOs.</li> </ul>

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This case study is part of the publication *Investing in sustainable mountain development: Opportunities, resources and benefits*. The publication looks at investments from the perspective of sustainable development. It presents 19 case studies from mountain regions around the world, covering efforts by diverse public and private actors, and ranging from classic examples of development investments to innovative financing mechanisms specifically tailored to the local context and conditions. The publication concludes with specific messages on mountain development, addressed to policymakers.

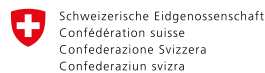
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